



Invited Commentary

Invited commentary on “Use of the eLogbook in surgical training in the United Kingdom: A nationwide survey and consensus recommendations from the Association of Surgeons in Training”



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Surgical competence requires substantial training and purposeful practice to acquire and maintain operative expertise. Operative volume is globally perceived as a surrogate of acquisition of competence. The surgical logbooks are universally used for recording operative activity and are a gauge of the operative exposure. They are a valuable resource for assessing progression of trainees and residents as well as the quality of surgical training. In recent years electronic logbooks have emerged as a ‘step forward’ in the assessment of surgical training quality [1]. One such electronic logbook is the eLogbook (<http://www.elogbook.org>) used by surgical trainees in the United Kingdom.

In this issue of *IJS*, Beamish and colleagues provide an insight into the perceptions regarding real-world eLogbook use among UK surgeons in training [2]. Their survey revealed that whereas majority of respondents perceived that surgical trainees used the eLogbook appropriately, its misuse was also a reality. The respondents attributed eLogbook misuse to pressure related to approaching training milestones, target case numbers required for training progression, issues with eLogbook functionality, training opportunity provision, and probity issues. Additionally, lack of validation of logbook entries by majority of the trainers raises questions about engagement of the trainers with the eLogbook initiative.

Electronic logbooks are a useful tool to gain better understanding of the dynamics of operative training. They are not only a record of the trainees’ operative volume but also provide valuable information about the attitude of trainers and the training environment. If on one hand the knowledge gained with more extensive analysis of electronic logbooks enables early identification of the “marginal trainee” then on the other hand performance of surgical trainers can also be compared with both the “ideal trainer” and with other trainers in their specialty.

Surgical training is in the midst of continuing and significant changes in both structure and content [3]. In this ever-changing training environment the role of surgical logbooks as a metric of operative exposure [4] and a tool for quality improvement of surgical training should not be underestimated. Beamish and colleagues also present several recommendations to address the flaws in eLogbook usage and mitigate erroneous over-reporting [2]. These

recommendations from the Council of the Association of Surgeons in Training provide valuable guidance on further improving accuracy of eLogbook and should be given due consideration by relevant stakeholders involved in improving the quality of surgical training in the United Kingdom.

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Invited Commentary, internally reviewed.

Declaration of competing interest

No conflict of interest to declare.

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